

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0352

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINT PDEV AO

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF LUANDA VIOLENCE

1. SUMMARY. FNLA AND MPLA ACCUSE EACH OTHER OF PROVOKING THE RECENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE IN LUANDA THAT TOOK OVER 200 LIVES. FNLA PERFORMED BADLY IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO TEACH MPLA A LESSON, AND MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WERE KILLED OR HURT. FNLA HAS BEEN EQUALLY INEPT IN ITS PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS SINCE THE CLASHES. THE PROSPECT IS FOR CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN LUANDA, BUT CIVIL WAR IS NOT IMMINENT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE VIOLENCE IN LUANDA MPLA FERVOR AMONG GHETTO DWELLERS IS AT A HIGH PITCH AND STORIES ABOUND OF
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FNLA ATROCITIES. MPLA HAS MADE THE MOST OF THE SITUATION BY TAKING

REPORTERS TO SEE SOME OF THE VICTIMS AND HAS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE GIVING ITS SIDE OF THE STORY (SEPTEL). MPLA MAINTAINS THAT FAR FROM PROVOKING, IT HAS BEEN THE VICTIM OF MANY PROVOWVTIONS. FNLA, MEANWHILE, HAS MADE AN EFFORT TO PUT OUT ITS SIDE OF THE STORY, BUT HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE INEPT AT PUBLIC RELATIONS. PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNNY EDUARDO TOLD THE FOREIGN PRESS ON APRIL TWO THAT FNLA WILL NOT TOLERATE LIES ABOUT ITS ACTIVITIES (HE MEANT STORIES ABOUT MASSACRES) AND THAT IT HAS THE FORCE TO EXPEL ANY OFFENDER FROM ANGOLA. EDUARDO CAME ACROSS TO THE LARGELY UNSYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE AS SOMETHING OF A GOON. HE SAID, "WE ARE NOT MAKING THREATS, WE ARE TELLING YOU HOW IT WILL BE."

3. MPLA HAS TOLD ME THAT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MASSACRED NEAR CAXITO WAS SEVENTY, AND THAT A NUMBER OF OTHERS ESCAPED, WHILE OTHERS WERE WOUNDED. MPLA DENIES ROUNDINGUP GHETTO DWELLERS AND ACCUSES FNLA OF BREAKING INTO MANY HOMES TO SEARCH FOR EVIDENCE THAT THE INHABITANTS SYMPATHIZED WITH THE MPLA. SUSPECTS WERE ARRESTED, BEATEN AND IN SOME CASES KILLED. FNLA IS ALSO ACCUSED OF KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE THROUGH INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS ON THE GHETTOES WITH MORTARS, BAZOOKAS AND GRENADES. THE NUMBER OF DEAD IS STILL NOT KNOWN, BUT THE POPULAR PERCEPTION IS THAT MANY HUNDRES HAVE BEEN KILLED. I HAVE HEARD ESTIMATES RANGING FROM FIVE HUNDRED TO TWO THOUSAND. ONE SOURCE WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE VISITED THE MORGUES AND HOSPITALS USES A FIGURE OF 350 DEAD. THE FIGURED USED BY THE MPLA IS 200. SOME REPORTS SPEAK OF THE METHOD USED DURING THE 1961 SLAUGHTER IN NORTHERN ANGOLA WHEN BODIES WERE DISMEMBERED, THE STOMACHS SLIT OPEN AND THE LIMBS INSERTED IN THE CABITY AS A WARNING. A PORTUGUESE NEWSPAPER THE OTHER DAY CARRIED A STORY WITH THE HEADLINE THAT "UPA IS BACK," A REFERENCE TO FNLA'S FORMER NAME. JOHNNY EDUARDO TOLD REPORTERS THAT UPA HAS INDEED RETURNED AND THAT FNLA IS NOT ASHAMED OF THE NAME. THOSE KILLED BY UPA IN 1961 WERE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE - EXPLOITERS. IN WAR PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE KILLED.

4. WHATEVER THE FACTS, MANY HAVE DIED AND FEELINGS OF RAGE, FEAR, AND FRUSTRATION EXIST IN THE GHETTOES. THE FACADE OF COOPERATION AT THE TOP LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IS GONE, TO BE REPLACED BY OPEN HOSTILITY AND SHOUTING MATCHES AT MEETINGS. NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD FULFILLING THE MARCH 28 AGREEMENT TO RELEASE PRISONERS, DISARM CIVILIANS AND WITHDRAW EXCESS
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TROOPS FROM LUANDA. MPLA SAYS THAT ITS PRISONS ARE OPEN FOR INSPECTION AND THAT IT STANDS READY TO LET THE PRISONERS GO ANY TIME FNLA DECIDES TO COOPERATE. JOHNNY EDUARDO SAID ON APRIL 2 THAT FNLA WILL NOT BEGIN AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS UNTIL MPLA RELEASES MIGUEL SEBASTIAO, BROTHER OF JOSE PEDRO, WHOM MPLA EXECUTED DURING THE VIOLENCE. FNLA CLAIMS MPLA IS AFRAID TO RELEASE HIM BECAUSE HE KNOWS TOO MUCH ABOUT MPLA ATROCITIES.

5. ON THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGINS OF THE VIOLENCE, FNLA CLAIMS IT WAS GOADED TO ACTION BY THE CONSTANT PROVOCATIONS OF MPLA. THIS IS A CERTAINLY TRUE IN THE BROAD SENSE; MPLA HAS GIVEN FNLA CAUSE MORE THAN ONCE TO TAKE REPRISALS. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT FNLA MADE A DECISION TO ACT ON MARCH 22-23. FNLA HAS BEEN SAYING FOR WEEKS, IF NOT MONTHS, THAT UNLESS MPLA CEASED ITS PROVOCATIONS IT WOULD HAVE TO ACT. THE MORE TIME THAT WENT BY WITHOUT FNLA ACTION, THE MORE ITS LEADERS MUST HAVE FELT THEY WERE EARNING THE IMAGE OF PAPER TIGERS. I IMAGINE THEY LET THEIR FRUSTRATIONS GET THE BETTER OF THEIR JUDGMENT.

6. IN ONE SENSE FNLA PROBABLY CAME OUT THE LOSER FROM THIS LATEST ROUND OF VIOLENCE. FNLA TROOPS DID NOT DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES BY THEIR ABILITY TO SEEK STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND HOLD THEM, NOR DID THE ORGANIZATION SEEM TO HAVE ANY OBJECTIVE OTHER THAN TO KILL AS MANY MPLA ELEMENTS AS POSSIBLE. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN ALL THEY WANTED TO DO, BUT MPLA IRREGULARS SEEMED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO HAVE THE UPPER HAND AND FNLA WAS REDUCED TO FITS OF RAGE AND WILD ASSAULTS ON ANYONE IN SIGHT. THE GHETTOES PROVED TO BE HOSTILE TERRITORY FOR FNLA AND IN WHICH ITS FORCES BLUNDERED ABOUT TRYING VAINLY TO SNUFF OUT RESISTANCE. MPLA SENTIMENT, ALWAYS STRONG IN LUANDA'S GHETTOES, HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY THE ACTIONS KOF FNLA TROOPS. FNLA THREATS TO BRING MASSIVE FORCES TO BEAR IN THE EVENT OF FUTURE TROUBLE HAVE A BRAVE RING, BUT I DOUBT THEY WOULD BE CAPABLE ENTIRELY OF WIPING OUT RESISTANCE, AND THEY MUST REALIZE THAT THIS IS THE CASE. STILL, THEIR STATED STRATEGY AT THE MOMENT IS THE APPLICATION OF EVEN GREATER FORCE UNTIL MPLA NO LONGER REPRESENTS A THREAT TO FNLA'S FREEDOM OF OPERATIONS AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, CEASES TO INSULT THE FNLA LEADERSHIP. IF THE FNLA GOAL WAS TO INSTILL FEAR IN THE POPULACE, THEY SUCCEEDED. IF THEY RULED ALONE FEAR WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO KEEP THE POPULATION UNDER CONTROL. UNFORTUNATELY
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FOR FNLA, THEY DO NOT HAVE ALL POWER AND AT SOME POINT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AFTER THE SENSE OF TERROR PASSES, WE CAN EXPECT MORE SMALL SCALE ATTACKS BY MPLA ACTIVISTS.

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7. MPLA, FOR ITS PART, IS FRIGHTENED. THEY HAVE SEEN WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THEM IN THE EVENT OF RENEWED HOSTILITIES AND ALTHOUGH THEY CAN COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF HUNDREDS, PERHAPS THOUSANDS, OF GUERRILLA FIGHTERS IN THE SLUMS, THEY ARE ALSO AWARE THAT MUCH OF THE LEADERSHIP WOULD BE WIPED OUT. AGOSTINHO NETO'S HASTY DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE A FEW DAYS AGO MUST BE ATTRIBUTED TO FEARS FOR HIS PERSONAL SAFETY. THE MPLA CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE OF MARCH 30, PUBLISHED ON APRIL 2, REITERATES THE STANDARD ANTI-IMPERIALIST HASH AND ADOPTS A TOUGH LINE, BUT AT THE VERY END APPEARS A CALL FOR A NEW SUMMIT MEETING OF THE THREE PRESIDENTS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

8. WITH RESPECT TO INTRA-MPLA DIFFERENCES, THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED, AT LEAST FOR THE SHORT RUN, BECAUSE THE RANK AND FILE PERCEIVE AN IMMEDIATE THREAT AND WILL SUPPORT CON-
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FRONTATION AT ALL LEVELS. FOR THE LONGER TERM, THE PROSPECTS OF THE ANDRADE FACTIONS, OR ACTIVE REVOLT, TO RESUME ACTIVITY IN THE MPLA ARE ENHANCED AND THE CURRENT CONFUSION OFFERS THE HIGH COMMISSIONER A CHANCE TO TRY AND NEGOTIATE THEIR REENTRY INTO THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. THEY SEEM UNSUITED TO THE ROUGHT AND TUMBLE OF ANGOLAN LIBERATION POLITICS, HOWEVER, AND NO ONE HAS HAD MUCH

SUCCESS IN GETTING THEM TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVES.

9. THERE EXISTS THE THESIS HERE THAT MPLA, EMBOLDENED BY THE TURN OF THE LEFT IN PORTUGAL (LUANDA 0303), INCREASED ITS EFFORTS TO PROVOKE A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE HOPE OF GAINING TWO THINGS; THE REMOVAL OF THE TOO IMPARTIAL HIGH COMMISSIONER AND A REVISION OF THE ALVOR AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO THIS THEORY, MPLA MILITARY COMMANDER IKO CARRERA RETURNED FROM LISBON WITH THE BAD NEWS THAT THE MPLA COULD EXPECT NO SUPPORT FROM THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND THAT THE PORTUGUESE TROOPS IN ANGOLA WOULD NOT COME IN ON THEIR SIDE. DESPITE THIS REPORT, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF IT, THE MPLA LEADERSHIP DECIDED TO SET OFF A WAVE OF VIOLENCE WITH THE IDEA OF FORCING THE PORTUGUESE TO TAKE A HAND IN MATTERS. THEY HOPED THROUGH THE CREATION OF A CHAOTIC SITUATION TO WIN A NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER, WHO COULD NOT BE ANY WORSE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, NO MATTER WHO HE WAS, THAN GENERAL CARDOSO. THEY MIGHT ALSO BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE A POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, IN WHICH THEY BELIEVE THEY WOULD MAKE A POOR SHOWING. IF THEY CAN BRING THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE ALVOR AGREEMENT TO THE BARGAINING TABLE, THE REASONING GOES, THEY WILL MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR THEIR DEMANDS. THEY WOULD COUNT ON PORTGUESE SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE THIS END. MPLA MIGHT, FOR INSTANCE GIVE UP THE ORGANIZATIONS KNOWN AS POPULAR POWER, WHICH IS ANATHEMA TO FNLA AND WHICH IS THE BASE OF MPLA PARAMILITARY SUPPORT IN THE GHETOES. THE CONCESSION WOULD BE MEANINGLESS, AS THE BASE WILL REMAIN INTACT UNDER ANY NAME. IF THE FNLA AGREES TO A POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTIONS,

IT IS SAID, UNITA WILL GO ALONG IN ORDER NOT TO STYMIE A SETTLEMENT. EVEN IF NO SUCH MPLA PLAN EXISTS, THE RESULTS OF ALL THAT HAS GONE ON MAY WELL BE A CHANGE IN THE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH ANGOLA WILL MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE WILL BE NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH EACH SIDE WILL AGREE TO GIVE UP SOMETHING. FOREIGN MINISTER MELO ANTUNES IS DUE TO RETURN TO LUANDA APRIL 3 TO LEND A HAND. HE WAS QUOTED IN TANZANIA AS SAYING HE WOULD RETURN TO LUANDA BECAUSE THE TRUCE HE HELPED NEGOTIATE

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"WAS NOT WORKING VERY WELL."

10 ONE OF THE DANGERS NOW, ASIDE FROM A REPETITION OF THE FNLA/ MPLA CLASHES, IS MOB VIOLENCE BY MPLA ACTIVISTS AGAINST WHITES AND THEIR BUSINESSES. FNLA IS IDENTIFIED WITH WHITE INTERESTS IN THE MINDS OF MPLA ADHERENTS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DESTRUCTIVE ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN SECTORS OF LUANDA IS NOW GREATER THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST. SOME FNLA OFFICIALS HAVE MOVED INTO NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE MANY FOREIGNERS, INCLUDING CONSULATE PERSONNEL, LIVE AND THE DANGER OF PHYSICAL HARM TO EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS HAS RISEN CORRESPONDINGLY.

11. CIVIL WAR IS ON EVERYONE'S MIND, BUT THE RISK IS PROBABLY NOT

MUCH HIGHER NOW THAN IT HAS BEEN THESE PAST FEW MONTHS AND DESPITE THE CHARGED ATMOSPHERE A GENERALIZED ARMED CONFLICT IS NOT IMMINENT. NEITHER MPLA NOR UNITA HAVE LARGE CONTINGENTS OF ARMED TROOPS. BOTH ORGANIZATIONS HAVE MANY RECRUITS IN TRAINING, BUT THEY DO NOT CONSTITUTE EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCES. FNLA HAS THE TROOPS, BUT LACKS THE ABILITY TO TRANSPORT THEM QUICKLY AND IN LARGE NUMBERS. THE POLITICAL COCKPIT WAS AND IS LUANDA. IT IS HERE THAT MPLA HAS DEMONSTRABLE MILITARY AND PARA MILITARY POWER AND IT IS HERE THAT MPLA WILL ASSERT ITSELF. MPLA'S BEST CHANCE TO NEUTRALIZE FNLA'S MILITARY MIGHT AND UNITA'S ELECTORAL STRENGTH IS TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOCIETY - KEY MINISTRIES, LABOR, THE MEDIA, BANKS; TO ANME A FEW - AND THE PRINCIPAL BATTLEFIELD FOR THIS STRUGGLE WILL BE LUANDA. MPLA CANNOT AND DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT A CIVIL WAR; UNITA'S POLICY TO WIN POWER INCLUDES EVERY STRATEGEM BUT CIVIL WAR. FNLA OFFICIALS CONSTANTLY TELL ME THAT IF PUSHED TOO FAR THEIR STRATEGY WILL BE TO ASSUME INTERNAL SECURITY FUNCTIONS IN AS MANY AREAS OF THE COUNTRY AS NECESSARY. THE LESSON THEY LEARNED IN LUANDA DURING THE LAST DAYS OF MARCH IS THAT ENUNCIATION OF THE POLICY IS EASIER THAN THE EXECUTION. THE OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUED TENSION AND RECURRING VIOLENCE IN LUANDA. KILLORAN

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